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ABSTRACT

Exciting developments in family theory construction over the past few years demand a constant survey and evaluation of measurable progress. This paper documents some developmental trends that have taken place in the use of family theory and in the theory construction itself, as well as the relation of theory to advances in methodology. In summary, the findings of this trend analysis are: first, it is evident that the relative lack of family theory continues. Second, in respect to the utilization of conceptual frameworks, family researchers continue to study the family from an individual rather than an interactional perspective. No marked changes are noted either in the type of data-gathering techniques used nor in the size of the samples utilized. Thus, the trends reveal a slow but steady improvement in the use of theories as bases for articles published in the family field. (Author)

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PILGRIM'S PROGRESS III:

A TREND ANALYSIS OF FAMILY THEORY AND METHODOLOGY*

James W. Hodgson and Robert A. Lewis**

Exciting developments in family theory construction over the past few years demand a constant survey and evaluation of measurable progress. This paper documents some developmental trends that have taken place in the use of and in family theory construction itself as well as the relation of theory to advances in methodology. Many of these trends are examined in the light of an earlier report, Pilgrim's Progress II (Klein et al., 1969).

METHOD

Since the presence of family-related articles is becoming increasingly scarce in general sociological and psychological journals (Klein et al., 1969), three specifically family-oriented journals (Journal of Marriage and the Family, The Family Coordinator, and Family Process) were selected for this eight-year trend analysis. Random, systematic sampling was accomplished by evaluating all articles in two out of four issues of these three journals from 1969 through 1976; the particular two issues were selected by a table of random numbers.

Each article was first categorized according to its general type (i.e., theoretical, empirical, both theoretical and empirical, methodological, professional, general or discussion); its conceptual framework; and its focus of study (a person dyad, family or extended family). Next, each article was categorized according to the use of the primary data-gathering technique, the

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primary statistical technique, and the sample size, following Ruano et al. (1969). These latter data were gathered to assess the state of family methodology independently and in relation to family theory development.

This investigation represents some divergence in methodology from earlier efforts to assess the family field. For example, some efforts have focused at least in part on books (Hill, 1958); Mogey, 1969) or on journals which are not primarily oriented towards the family (Klein et al., 1969). Our strategy excluded books from consideration both because the number of family theory books published each year is all too few and because journal articles probably provide a more immediate and representative view of the state of the field. Although it is not our intent to deny that important contributions to the study of the family are still made in the more general sociological or psychological journals, the fact was well established by Klein et al. (1969) that the presence of family articles in these journals is becoming increasingly scarce. In 1968, for instance, Klein et al. (1969) discovered that only 11 family articles were found in the ten leading sociology journals, a decline from 24 in 1963. Quantitatively, the inclusion of articles from such journals would have very minimal impact on the study of overall trends.

We submit that one sign of the growing maturation of family theory and research is that the great majority of articles concerned with the family are being published in journals exclusively designed for that purpose. This trend, already noted by Klein et al. in 1969, convinced the present authors that their and future trend reports should differ therefore from previous efforts in the journals which are sampled. Accordingly, the three journals sampled for this trend report were those which publish the bulk of research reports and applied articles on the family.

FINDINGS

Types of Articles

A number of previous writers (Hill, 1966; Klein et al., 1969; Holland, 1970; Buric, 1971; Burr, 1973) have decried the fact that little research on the family has been guided by theoretical formulations. In their systematic attempt to empirically assess the state of this field, Klein et al. (1969) found that during the years 1962 to 1968 only 20.5 percent of their surveyed articles had any theoretical base; this was determined by combining two categories, the theoretical and the theoretical-empirical articles. Furthermore, there did not appear to be any trend towards an increased use of theory, since 21 percent of the articles in 1962 had some theoretical orientation while this was the case for only 18 percent of the articles assessed for 1968.

One of the purposes of the present trend report was to determine whether this situation had changed in the ensuing eight years. (In comparing our results with those reported by Klein et al. 1969, however, it must be kept in mind that the present study did not sample the very same journals and thus the two samples are not completely comparable.)

Table 1 summarizes for each year from 1969 to 1976 the percentages of articles which were categorized according to the essential type (nature) of article. It is evident from these data that the relative absence of theory, as noted by Klein et al. (1969), has continued; however, the percentage of articles with some theoretical base, it should be noted, has increased absolutely in the last eight years. That is, Klein et al.'s (1969) overall figure of 20.5 percent for the combined years of 1962-1968 has increased in absolute terms to 34 percent during 1969-1976. It is interesting, however, that not even one article sampled in 1974 could be classified as predominately theoretical.

Table 1 About Here

Table 1. Percentages of Types of Articles by Year, 1969-1976

Type of Article	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	Totals N	Totals %
Empirical	19	28	12	34	19	25	17	15	131	21
Theoretical	8	5	6	8	11	0	7	12	43	7
Theoretical-Empirical	30	30	21	22	25	30	29	28	166	27
Methodological	4	5	1	8	4	4	5	8	30	5
General	7	5	8	4	7	0	5	6	31	5
Professional	14	15	17	13	15	28	32	24	122	20
Discussion	18	12	35	11	19	13	5	7	91	15
Total Percentages	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100		100
N	89	78	66	77	73	77	87	67	614	

The findings presented in Table 1 differ from those reported by Klein et al. (1969) also in that most of this overall increase appears in the category labeled "theoretical-empirical," that is, articles which present empirical findings as interpreted through some theoretical scheme (an increase from 15 to 27 percent). Undoubtedly, this overall increase will be interpreted by many as an indicator that there has been not only an increase in the use of theory but perhaps also an increasing base of tested theoretical propositions for the future development of family theories. The complement of this interpretation may be noted in the overall decrease in the percentage of articles which are purely empirical, that is, without theoretical underpinnings (a sizeable decrease from 53.5 percent during 1962-1968 to 21.3 percent during 1969-1976).

Use of Conceptual Frameworks

A second concern of Klein et al. (1969) was an identification of the most fertile theories and conceptual frameworks in the family field. Although these investigators did not provide any indications of trends throughout the seven years of their analysis, they listed the percentages of framework utilization as 1) interactional (27.3%), 2) structure-functional (24.5%), and 3) developmental (14.6%). A number of other frameworks and theories comprised the remaining 33.6% of their theoretically-based articles.

In the present trend report, the same frameworks and/or theories, with the addition of the institutional, continued to dominate the field during the years 1969-1976 (See Table 2). An analysis of the year-by-year use of these theories, however, reveals some interesting trends not evident in Klein et al's (1969) data. While interactional theory continued to be the most popular theoretical base for the entire eight-year period, its usage in the family field appears to have declined markedly in the last five years and suffered a slight overall reduction in use from 27.3 percent during 1962- 1968 to 23.9 percent during 1969-1976.

Adherence to structure-functionalism appears to have remained relatively stable from 1969 to 1976, but there was a small overall decrease from 24.5 percent during 1962-1968, compared to 21.7 percent from 1969-1976. The developmental framework has increasingly extended its influence, comprising 19.4 percent of all sampled articles of a theoretical nature during 1969-1976, as compared to an overall 14.6 percent during 1962-1968. In addition, a sizeable increase in the use of the developmental framework was evident in 1974 as was true for the institutional framework in 1969. These 13 institutional-based theoretical articles help account for the overall increase in the use of this theory during the last eight years (an increase from two percent to 16.1). A notable introduction in the present trend report is the appearance of systems theory as the base of 8.3 percent of all articles assessed during 1969 - 1976, an innovation heralded by Broderick in 1971.

Table 2 About Here

The Unit of Analysis

Since the development of family theory (as compared to theories about individuals in families) depends upon the degree to which the family is conceptualized and researched as an interacting group or system, attention was also given in this trend analysis to the unit of analysis in those family articles assessed between 1969 and 1976.

Ruano et al. (1969) in their review of 600 empirical, family-oriented articles published between the years 1962-1968 determined that family researchers had focused on the total family as the researchable unit in only 13.3 percent of their articles. In Table 3, one may note that the overall percentage apparently has not increased greatly in that the whole (nuclear) family considered as the researchable (analytic) unit amounted to only 15.1 percent of the "family"

Table 2. Number of Articles Subscribing to Seven Conceptual Frameworks by Year, 1969-1976

Theory	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	Total N	Total %
Developmental	1	6	1	4	3	10	7	3	35	19
Systems	2	0	1	0	4	3	1	4	15	8
Structure-Functionalism	4	2	0	6	6	4	9	8	39	22
Situational	1	0	2	1	5	3	0	0	12	7
Interactional	4	14	9	4	2	3	4	3	43	24
Exchange	1	0	1	3	1	0	0	1	7	4
Institutional	13	3	0	1	4	0	5	3	29	16
Total	26	25	14	19	25	23	26	22	180	100

studies (this percentage is a combination of the two categories, the family as the unit and the family as an interacting system). It may be interesting to note also that the individual (usually the college-student child) remained the modal, analytic unit in family study during the last eight years. In fact, this 56 percent (N=161) is much higher than that reported by Ruano et al. (1969), which for 1962-1968 was 38.7 percent. Only four percent of the articles utilized the extended family as the unit of analysis. No wonder that family theory has emerged so slowly, when individuals are still the focus of "family" researchers.

Table 3 About Here

Techniques of Data Gathering and Sample Size

The remaining tasks of this trend report were geared to determine whether the methodology in family study has improved in rigorousness over the last eight years. Table 4 suggests that the questionnaire and interview techniques continue to dominate the data gathering techniques, 29.6 percent and 25.5 percent respectively. These percentages are comparable to those which Ruano et al. (1969) reported for 1962-1968, that is 33.6 percent and 20.9 percent.

Although the use of direct observation seems to have nearly doubled (8.5 percent) over 4.3 percent reported for 1962-1968, the use of secondary materials, e.g. census data, which involves no direct contact between researcher and respondent, has remained about the same, that is 17.7 as compared with 19.8 percent.

Table 4 About Here

Not only have data collection techniques continued to dominate the methodologies, but the modal sample size from 1969 to 1976 was the range from 100-999. See Table 5. These two findings are not independent, since large sample size

Table 3. Percentages of Unit of Analysis by Year, 1969-1976

Unit of Analysis	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	Total N	Total %
Individual as Unit	66	67	52	65	45	54	34	48	161	56
Dyad as Unit	7	7	0	9	16	5	23	14	30	10
Dyad as Interacting System	13	18	24	16	13	13	18	7	44	15
Family as Unit	5	0	10	3	10	13	10	14	21	7
Family as Interacting System	7	6	9	3	10	13	6	14	23	8
Extended Family as Unit	2	0	0	2	6	2	3	0	6	2
Extended Family as Interacting System	0	2	5	2	0	0	6	3	6	2
Total Percentages	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100		100
N	44	45	21	43	31	39	39	29	291	

Table 4. Percentages of Data Gathering Techniques By Year, 1969-1976

Data Gathering Technique	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	Total N	Total %
Questionnaire	41	36	23	30	20	39	18	21	87	30
Interview	23	36	33	37	20	12	18	28	75	25
Census or Other Secondary Sources	11	4	19	2	35	17	40	21	52	18
Standardized Test(s)	4	4	5	12	3	10	7	10	21	7
Direct Observation	5	7	10	0	6	7	7	3	16	5
Combination of Direct Observation and Other	2	2	5	0	6	5	3	3	9	3
Other Combinations	14	11	5	19	10	10	7	14	34	12
Total Percentages	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100		100
N	44	45	21	43	31	41	40	29	294	

usually indicates data gathering techniques which are also of large scale. In sum, samples are relatively large but usually non-random.

Table 5 About Here

Levels of Measurement

The final methodological issue addressed by the present study was the choice of statistical procedures. Ruano et al. (1969) reported that 46.4 percent of the empirical studies they examined (1962-1968) were restricted to a nominal level of measurement. Table 6 suggests that the percentage use of nominal level statistics has greatly decreased to 56 out of 289 studies (or 19.4 percent). Within the last eight years there also appears to have been a subtle increase in the use of more sophisticated interval level statistical techniques of both a bivariate and multivariate nature. When these two categories in Table 6 are combined, the percent of interval level statistics increases every year except one (1973), from 20.4 percent in 1969 to 51.7 percent in 1976. Although until in 1976 the single most common strategy in family data analysis usually was to categorize phenomena and report them in terms of percentages, the continuing changes noted in the last eight years bode well for the development of both family theory and methodology.

Table 6 About Here

The Interface Between Theory and Research

Finally, it was expected that an assessment of the interface between theory and methodology, that is, the assumption that the fertility of the respective theoretical frameworks is related to a study's methodological sophistication, would yield an index of the relative contribution of the various frameworks and theories to the field.

Table 5. Percentage Sample Size by Year, 1969-1976

Sample Size	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	Total N	Total %
1-29	2	4	36	2	7	5	0	10	19	6
30-99	16	20	5	16	19	22	26	21	55	21
100-999	64	60	32	61	42	44	29	48	144	48
1000 +	18	16	27	21	32	29	45	21	75	25
Total Percentages	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100		100
N	44	45	22	43	31	41	38	29	293	

Procedure	1969		1970		1971		1972		1973		1974		1975		1976		Totals	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
No Statistical Test Performed	21	48	15	33	9	47	15	35	18	58	14	36	15	38	7	24	114	40
Nominal Level																		
Chi-Square	12		15		1		7		1		8		6		3		33	
Bionomial Probability	0		1		0		0		0		0		0		0		1	
Fisher's Exact Test	0		0		0		1		0		0		0		0		1	
Other	0		0		0		0		0		0		0		1		1	
Nominal Level Total	12	28	16	36	1	5	8	19	1	3	8	20	6	15	4	14	36	19
Ordinal Level																		
Gamma (Goodman-Kruskal)	1		0		1		1		1		1		1		2		8	
Kendall's Tau	0		1		0		0		0		0		1		0		2	
Sign Test	1		1		0		1		0		0		0		1		4	
Spearman Rank Correlation	0		0		1		1		1		0		0		0		3	
Other	0		0		1		0		1		0		0		0		2	
Ordinal Level Total	2	4	2	5	3	16	3	7	3	10	1	3	2	5	3	10	19	7
Interval Level-Bivariate																		
t test	4		3		2		5		4		2		2		5		27	
z test	0		0		0		1		1		1		0		0		3	
1 way ANOVA	0		2		0		2		0		4		1		2		11	
Pearson Product-Moment Correlation	3		1		1		1		2		2		5		3		18	
Interval Level-Bivariate Total	7	16	6	13	3	16	9	20	7	23	9	23	8	21	10	35	59	20
Interval Level-Multivariate																		
Multivariate Correlation/ Regression	0		2		0		3		1		4		3		4		17	
Multiple ANOVA	2		1		1		2		0		2		2		0		10	
Factor Analysis	0		3		2		3		1		1		2		1		13	
Other	0		0		0		0		0		0		1		0		1	
Interval Level-Multivariate Total	2	4	6	13	3	16	8	19	2	6	7	18	8	21	5	17	41	14
Total Percentages		100		100		100		100		100		100		100		100		100
N	44		45		19		43		31		39		39		29		289	

In attempting to accomplish this, five criteria were identified as some indicators of methodological sophistication. The criteria selected were: 1) whether the article focused on the dyad, family or extended family as an interacting system rather than an individual; 2) whether the study employed reasonably sophisticated data-gathering techniques, as judged by either the use of trained observers or a combination of any two varieties of measurement; 3) whether the sample size exceeded 100; 4) whether interval data at least were employed in the statistical procedures, and 5) whether the data analysis employed multivariate statistics.

Unfortunately, only four theoretical frameworks inspired enough empirical research to justify their evaluation according to these criteria: the interactional (36 articles); the developmental (29 articles); the structure-functional (38 articles); and the institutional (29 articles). The results are presented in Table 7.

An examination of these data in Table 7 reveals that the interactionist studies more often focused on the whole family and encouraged more sophisticated data-gathering techniques than did the other three frameworks. These advantages seem to be countered somewhat, however, by their not using as large a sample size and less use (only 39 percent) of interval data. Interestingly, only a minority of studies (24 percent) reflecting the developmental framework focused on the family as an interacting unit. The developmental and interactional studies appear to be somewhat comparable in their data gathering and use of multivariate statistical procedures; percentage wise, they exceeded structure-functional studies on all criteria except that of sample size. Studies carried out under the institutional framework generally consisted of more descriptive, comparative analyses, which never analyzed the family or its dyads as an interacting system, and least often utilized interval data and multivariate statistics.

Table 7 About Here

Table 7. Percentages of Methodological Procedures Employed in Theoretical-Empirical Articles Subscribing to Four Major Theoretical Frameworks

Theoretical Framework	% of Articles Focusing on Interacting System	% of Articles Which Gathered Data By Observation or Combination of Procedures	% of Articles with Sample Size More than 100	% of Articles with Statistical Procedures Employing Interval Data	%of Articles with Multivariate Statistical Procedures
Interactional (N=29)	78	36	58	39	19
Developmental (N=21)	24	28	83	48	21
Structure-Functional (N=22)	18	13	84	45	11
Institutional (N=21)	0	10	79	31	10

DISCUSSION

The State of Family Study

Hill's (1966) plea for accretive theory building in the family area has not fallen on deaf ears, witness the impending publication of Contemporary Theories About the Family, these family theory workshops which meet annually prior to the meetings of the NCFR, the advances in metatheory and the construction of several family theories in the middle range. And yet, as these data suggest, the relative deficit of theory has continued. As Klein et al., 1969 also noted eight years earlier, only a minority of family articles (now only one-third) in the three leading family journals have any theoretical base. The great majority of family articles are atheoretical. Perhaps it is true, as Sprenkle has mused:

> "I wonder, however, if this vast outpouring of (theoretical) activity is not vastly outstripping the willingness or ability of researchers to test it." (Sprenkle, 1976:261)

or as Riskin and Faunce before him suggested:

> "The field may not need new hypotheses as much as methods for testing an overabundance of existing hypotheses." (1972:376)

On the other hand, the quantitative trends reported in this analysis, in some respects, do not adequately document the qualitative improvements and the laudable, serious attempts at family theory construction and theory testing which are reported in non-journals. These absences are a limitation of this survey. However, the overall impression one receives from the present data is that significant changes seem to be occuring in certain areas of family study, while other quarters remain at a relatively primitive state of development. In effect, the quality of work seems to be increasingly variable.

This impression can be documented at least in an indirect way by comparing the methodological sophistication of atheoretical studies with those grounded in one of the seven theoretical frameworks. Thus, out of all articles considered to be grounded within one of the frameworks, 18 percent made use of some multi-

variate statistics, contrasted to only 12 percent of the empirical articles which are devoid of theory. Furthermore, 46 percent of the solely empirical articles presented data in terms of percentages only, in contrast to only 32 percent of the theoretical-empirical articles. The tendency is thus for articles which are more sophisticated methodologically to be more theoretically sound as well.

The Utilization of Theoretical Frameworks

Some indications of those theoretical frameworks which have stimulated more productive research appear in the data of this survey. For instance, the symbolic interactional approach, which has long been the dominant conceptual framework in family studies (Hansen and Hill, 1960; Christensen, 1964; Schvaneveldt, 1966), has not only remained the leading framework since Klein et al's analysis, but was found to have encouraged both quantity and quality in research methodology. Given this evidence of viability, the apparent decline in its use during the last few years is at first an enigma.

Several hypotheses, however, may help to explain this decrease in the use of symbolic interaction.[1] Firstly, it may not be a coincidence that while interactionism has decreased, the developmental and systems frameworks have increased in use. These changes may be dynamically related to the observation that the interactional framework could be integrated and incorporated within either the developmental or the systems frameworks (Broderick, 1961).[2] For example, the analysis of families

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[1]Several of the following hypotheses have been suggested to us by Robert E. Larzelere (1976).

It must be noted at this point, that the proportion of articles utilizing the interactional framework is probably overinflated, due to the fact that only nine percent of the interactional articles had specific references to that framework, in contrast to 57 percent of the developmental and 72 percent of the systems articles which had direct references to these frameworks (Larzelere, 1976).

[2]One recent example of the successful incorporation of a symbolic interactional focus within developmental theory is that of Krain (1975). An example of the incorporation of structure-functional concepts within developmental theory is an article by Gage (1975).

by stages in the family life cycle has become associated with the developmental rather than the interactional framework, even though both have emphasized process. Likewise, both the interactional and the systems frameworks are dynamic rather than static and emphasize the interdependence of family members for perceptions of self, other, and the situation. And, interactional conceptualizations with their emphasis on the individual personality as it is affected by interaction with others seem particularly well suited for an extension into a more complex systems analysis, where the only critical distinction is that the interactional effects are viewed as more complex. In effect, systems theory would be a logical extension of interactional theory, providing a more sophisticated view of the family and of the effects of the family's interactions with outside forces.

Although developmental theory has enjoyed a longer and more widely respected niche than the systems approach has in family study, it too seems to be still evolving as a conceptual scheme for the unification of family theory (Broderick, 1971).

Secondly, the interactional framework is relatively limited in its subject areas to socialization and personality development (Dager, 1964; Stryker, 1964), whereas the other two frameworks are much more inclusive. And, it shares many of its major concepts with the other two frameworks, whereas the developmental and systems frameworks have major concepts not shared by the interactional.

Lastly, the declining use of interactionism may be due to the fact that it has not been elaborated greatly since Mead's initial fromulation in 1934. Schvaneveldt (1966) has suggested that the interactionist framework has been followed more than formulated over the last 40 years (and probably has evolved fewer hypotheses for testing).

Of course, it is all but impossible to extrapolate from these trend data, as to which of these theoretical frameworks may eventually become the dominant framework, if any do. However, it is our prediction that there will be a gradual movement over the next 8-10 years toward one or two major, inductive frameworks which will encompass the most vital concepts found in all of the frameworks.

It may be interesting to note, however, that both the developmental and systems frameworks are eclectic and have the characteristic of concept incorporation.[1] Likewise, the trend data may suggest to some that the developmental and systems frameworks may already be playing a unifying role, although it is premature to herald any substantial trend.

The Wedding of Theory and Methodology

The implications of our findings in the area of methodology are fairly clear, i.e., family research needs to utilize more sophisticated experimental designs; data which emphasize the family system from multiple perspectives (Cf. Larson, 1974); multivariate statistical techniques; and better measurement. The finding that only five percent of the family articles were primarily methodological suggests to us that the family field would be greatly benefited by the training of more professionals who specialize in methodology and measurement, such as life-span developmental psychology has done in recent years.[2]

More important than these implications, however, are the implications of these findings in regard to the interface between theory and methodology. Of special concern here is the isomorphism (or more correctly, the lack of it) between theory and methodology. It has been noted already that the systems framework must develop better linkages between its concepts and the measurement of those concepts and that the interactional framework apparently influences the topics of research more than developing researchable hypotheses. Moreover, there were abundant examples in the literature we reviewed for this trend analysis

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[1] Several authors have recently suggested, however, that better linkages will have to be developed between the conceptual and methodological levels for systems theory to become a major contributor to family study. For instance, Larzelere (1976) found that only one-third of the articles using the systems framework was empirical.

[2] Larzelere (1976) has noted that these developmental methodologists first identified the unique aspect(s) of their theory and then developed the appropriate methodologies to capture these aspects.

which suggested that all too often theory and method are practiced in isolation to each other (Cf. Ritzer, 1975). Nowhere was this isolationism more easily seen than in structure-functional studies of families in which the individual is still the unit of analysis and in interactional studies of mental processes which use observational methods (Ritzer, 1975). Similarly, many voices have joined together to deplore the research efforts of all those who try to study marital adjustment, marital power, or other topics of marital interaction from data gathered on individuals. In summary, the results of this trend analysis point up once again the reciprocal relationships between theory and methodology in that one's theory usually dictates one's method and sometimes one's method dictates one's findings, and thus one's theory. These are problems of the philosophy of science, a subject about which family researchers all too often remain ignorant. In summary, family theorists especially need to deal more frequently and more effectively with the interface between theory and methodology.

CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this trend analysis are summarized as follows: first, it is evident that the relative deficit of family theory, first noted by Klein et al. (1969), has continued, although the proportion of articles with some theoretical base increased from one-fifth to one-third of all articles analyzed. One hopeful sign is that this overall increase is in the use of theory to derive and test hypotheses and to explain empirical findings.

Secondly, in respect to the utilization of conceptual frameworks, although symbolic interaction continued to be the most popular theoretical base over the past eight years, its use has declined markedly in the last few years. Use of the structure-functional framework has declined somewhat; however, the developmental, the institutional and systems frameworks have increased in utilization among family writers. Unfortunately, family researchers have continued to study the family from an individual rather than an interactional perspective.

Likewise, there have been no marked changes over the years either in the type of data-gathering techniques used (still questionnaires and interviews) nor in the size of the samples utilized; that is, although the samples are relatively large, they are still nonrandomly selected. On the other hand, one optimistic note was the finding that the use of nominal levels of measurement has declined over the years and more sophisticated, interval statistical techniques, both of a bivariate and multivariate nature, are now in use.

Finally, a multi-criteria index of methodological sophistication revealed that the interactionist approach seemed to encourage more sophisticated experimental designs, usually focused on the family as an interacting system, and made better use of data-gathering techniques than did the structure-functional, institutional and developmental frameworks. Both the developmental and interactional-based studies, however, appeared to be more advanced in their utilization of sophisticated statistical procedures.

In many respects the trends reveal a slow but steady improvement in the use of theories as bases for articles published in the family field. Unfortunately, a general impression remains, in that, even though some significant innovations in metatheory have appeared, the use of family theory is still in a relatively primitive state. Likewise, very few articles on theory construction per se or basically theoretical articles are published in any of these three major family journals.

In summary, although some improvements have been noted in the trends described over the last eight years and in contrast to earlier studies of 1962-1968, the field of family theory construction and its interface with methodological advances and sophistication has much room for improvement.

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